Department of Veterans Affairs, VHA, Employee Education System (EES)

Employee Education System 1

Employee Education System

EES Web Product Development Style Guide

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EES Web Style Guide Contents

<h2 style="text-align:center">(DRAFT 6.20.06) EES Web Product Development Style Guide</h2>

Style Guide Objectives
- Competitive: Reinforce EES's brand identity.
- Recognition: Provide continuity in EES web site appearance.
- Quality: Provide specific guidelines for EES Product and Business sites.
- Consistency: Protect and regulate the use of EES names, logos and graphic devices.

General Guidelines & Standards
Guidelines: The following guidelines will ensure a site that is responsive to user needs and fulfill EES's web development objectives.

Design
- Keep design clean and simple
- Avoid non-relevant graphics and/or animation
- Design pages with enough white space to avoid a cluttered appearance
- Place major content "above the fold" (in the top 440 pixels of the screen)
- Prevent the need to scroll the screen horizontally
- Information Architecture
  - Enable the user to quickly find what they are looking for.
  - Manage large bodies of content effectively

Content
- Ensure content is fresh and current
- Construct and develop content according to the needs of your clients
- Keep written content short and concise.
  1) 79% of users scan the page instead of reading word-for-word.
  2) Reading from computer screens is 25% slower than from paper.
  3) Web content should have 50% of the word count of its paper equivalent.
- Writing for the Web reference link: http://www.sun.com/980713/webwriting/

Performance
- All pages, including graphics and HTML, are 50K or less.
- Simplify table structure. Avoid use of complex tables for web page layout.
- Design for easy reading and page scanning for all types of users (see "Accessibility" section).
- Utilize templates to reinforce familiarity and consistency.
- Consistent File Structure
  - Keep a consistent file structure. Once the web site has been published, others may need to update the pages.
    - Use only lower case letters for file names
  - Remember to incorporate HTML comments whenever necessary

Standards:

Meta Data
- Refer to the draft VA document "Department of Veterans Affairs, Metadata Standard".

- Additional meta data standards may need to be referenced for EES Web-Based Training Web Sites.
- Mandatory VA Meta Data Elements:

Element	Description	Format/Value
Title	The formal title that is on the resource.	Free text
Author	The organization or service primarily responsible for the content of the resource.	Free text
Description	An abstract or free text account of the content of the resource.	Free text
Keywords	Terms and phrases representing significant concepts discussed in the resource.	Controlled Vocabulary: VA Web Thesaurus
Subject	Subject categories representing the primary topic(s) of the content of the resource.	Controlled Vocabulary: Subject Taxonomy
Date Created	Date the resource was created	MM/DD/YYYY.
Date Modified	Date on which the resource was last changed.	MM/DD/YYYY.
Type	Describes the nature or genre of the content of the resource.	Controlled Vocabulary: Resource Type List

VA Directive/Handbook 6102

It is mandatory that designs comply with the policies contained in VA Directive 6102 (http://vaww.va.gov/med/intranetpm/devcorner/library/docs/final6102Directive.doc)

1) And as defined in VA Handbook 6102H (http://vaww.va.gov/med/intranetpm/devcorner/library/docs/final6102Handbook.doc)

Accreditation

All EES Product web sites developed as a course for accreditation shall comply with the policies of all accrediting bodies for web-based Continuing Medical Education (CME).

- Web-based CME policy for the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME): http://www.accme.org

Accessibility

- Standards:
  - It is mandatory that all federal government web sites comply with Section 508 requirements (http://www.section508.gov/).
- Guidelines:
  - Web sites shall be accessible by people with disabilities (e.g., deafness, hearing impairment, blindness, color deficiency, low vision, motor/dexterity impairments)
  - Follow the guidelines from:

- The Center for Information Technology Accommodation (CITA), in the U.S. General Services Administration's Office of Government wide Policy: http://www.section508.gov/
- The World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative: http://www.w3.org/TR/WD-WAI-PAGEAUTH/

Flash

Macromedia Flash should not be used to create entire web sites nor should Flash be used for critical Web functions such as site navigation. Flash may be used to develop animations and interactive content segments. Flash can be slow and is dependent on PC and browser configurations. It is not necessarily accessible to all users.

- File sizes for Flash/Shockwave content:

	Average File Size	Maximum File Size
Low-bandwidth:	@ 50 KB	@ 75 KB
High-bandwidth:	@ 200KB	@ 400 KB

- All Flash content must be Section 508 compliant.

EES Product Web Sites

Definitions:
There are two types of EES Product Web Sites that pertain to this style guide:
1. Educational Resource Site: a web site that has as its purpose to provide information or performance support activities on a certain topic or topics. Resources from this site may include: web courses, web applications, curriculum pages, informational brochures, manuals, etc.
2. Web-Based Training (WBT) Site: a web site that has as its purpose to provide educational products to change knowledge, skills, or abilities.

Standards:
Color & Typeface
- Background color of Content Area: #ffffff (white), or a color providing adequate contrast with the web page's text and navigational elements.
- Content Area HTML Font/Text Color: #000000 (black) or a color in keeping with the web site's color scheme which is clearly distinguishable from the background color.
- Link Color: Influenced by the site's color scheme to maintain legibility.
- Visited Link Color: Influenced by the site's color scheme to maintain legibility.
- Font Family for HTML text: Arial, Helvetica, Veranda or other sans-serif typeface.
- Font Size: The text of the Content area shall be resizable by the end user.
Page Width & Frames
- To prevent horizontal scrolling, the entire width of the page should be easily viewable at no greater than 780 pixels.

- o This page size is based on a 17 inch monitor set to a screen resolution of 800 x 600 pixels.
- The use of frames is strongly discouraged but frames may be used at the developer's discretion as long as they are properly implemented following Section 508 guidelines.

Consistent VA Seal & EES Web Logo Placement:
- The VA Seal shall be consistently placed in the top, left-hand corner of every EES Web Product page.
  - o The VA Seal graphic shall be no larger than 90 pixels x 90 pixels (1.25 inches) and no smaller than 72 pixels x 72 pixels (1 inch).
- The EES Web Logo shall be consistently placed on every page at the bottom or after the last link of the Navigation Column.
  - o The EES Web Logo must have an associated ALT tag with the words "Employee Education System (EES) logo and link to web site" when the user's cursor hovers over the EES Web Logo. If clicked, the link will open a new window containing the EES Web Site (vaww.ees.lrn.va.gov).
- A client or product logo/image may be placed within the banner on the right-side.

Required VA 6102 Links:
- All required links that fulfill VA Directive 6102 requirements shall appear in a consistent location on every page of a web site.
- Required links for VA Intranet or Internet web sites.
  1) "Disclaimers"
     - VA Intranet: http://vaww.va.gov/disclaim/
     - Internet: http://www.va.gov/disclaim/
  2) "Privacy Policy"
     - VA Intranet: http:// vaww.va.gov/privacy/
     - Internet: http://www.va.gov/privacy/
  3) "Accessibility"
     - VA Intranet: http://vaww1.va.gov/accessible/
     - Internet: http://www.va.gov/accessible/
  4) "Content Contact" *(e-mail address of person/office responsible for the web site's content)*
  5) "Webmaster" *(e-mail address of the web site's technical contact person/office)*

Layout Templates:
- All web pages must follow the EES Style Guide Layout Templates. These templates are designed to provide maximum flexibility while maintaining a consistent look and feel to pages.
- The Layout Templates consist of a:
  1) Navigation Column,
  2) Banner area
  3) Top Navigation area
  4) Content Area
  5) Bottom Navigation area.
  6) Footer
  7) Cap and End Cap (WBT sites only)

- Refer to this style guide's appendices for a visual example of the Layout Templates and for examples of web pages based on the Templates.

Navigation Column
- The Navigation Column contains Primary and Secondary Navigation links.
- The EES Web Logo is placed last after all other links in the Navigation Column.
- Standards:
  1) A 10 pixel margin shall be maintained between the edge of the Navigation Column and its content.

Banner
- The Banner area is at the top of the page and contains a title and any associated graphic/photographic image.

Top Navigation
- The Top Navigation area shall be used for secondary navigation to top-level pages, assessment, evaluation, and course brochure information were applicable.
- Standards:
  1) The Top Navigation may contain a secondary row of navigation when required.

Content Area
- The Content Area may contain the page title, text, table graphics, images, rich media content (captioned video and animations), and must contain required secondary navigational elements such as "next" and "previous" page links.
- The Content Area may be split into multiple columns and/or rows if images and rich media content will be used.
    - Video media content shall be no larger than 320x240 pixels.
    - If necessary to reproduce a large image then a smaller version of the image shall be used within the Content Area along with a link to the image at a larger pixel size.
        - The link shall provide information about the file size of the larger image.
        - The larger image shall open in a new window with only scroll bars, if necessary, and the ability for the user to resize and close the window.
- Maintain a 20 pixel margin between text and image/rich media content.
- Maintain a 20 pixel margin around the edge of the Content Area.
- A "Top of Page" link shall be used on pages requiring vertical page scrolling.

Bottom Navigation Area
- May contain the same Secondary Navigation links as located in the Top Navigation Area.

Footer Area
- Shall contain all required VA Directive 6102 links (See the "Required VA 6102 Links" section).

Cap and End Cap
- Applies only to Web-Based Training (WBT) Sites.
- A small row located across the top and bottom of every web page.

- On the left side of each "cap" row contains the title of the site offering the WBT courses, such as "EES On-Line Learning Web Site"
- On the right side of each "cap" row is located a button titled "Exit This Course" allowing the user to exit the course and return to the site offering the course.

Navigational Elements:
<u>Primary Navigation</u>
- Definition: refers to a list of site-specific links used to navigate the major content categories/sections of the site.
- Standards: Primary Navigation links appear in the Banner or Navigation Column area of the page.
- Guidelines:
    - Use bold text
    - Differentiate the appearance of the link associated with the current page.

<u>Secondary Navigation</u>
- Definition: Site-specific links that may access supplementary information, assessments, evaluations, and a course brochure.
- Secondary navigation links shall follow this naming convention where applicable:
    - "Home" (This page contains or links to the Course Brochure information)
    - "Course Map"
    - "Final Exam/Evaluation"
    - "Exit Course"
    - "Help"
    - "Search"
    - "Glossary"
    - "Resources"

<u>Content Area Navigation</u>
- Definition: Links that allow user navigation within the same section/topic of a site/course.
- "Breadcrumb" navigation may be used at the top and bottom of the Content Area.
- Content Area navigation links shall follow this naming convention where applicable:
    - Next
    - Back
    - Page X of Y
    - Play
    - Stop/Pause
    - Top of Page

EES and VA Graphic Standards
- All EES branded Web sites shall comply with the standards set forth in the EES Graphic Standards Manual and the VA Graphic Standards Manual.
    - Further information about VA Graphic Standards may be found at: http://vaww.va.gov/facelift/resources/images/seals/default.asp

- o ESS Graphic Standards Manual can found in the EES Brand Center section of the EES Internal Web site
  (*http://vaww.lrn.va.gov/graphics/eeslogo.asp*)
- All EES logos and trade marks shall be obtained from the EES Brand Central section of the EES Internal Web Site.
  (*http://vaww.lrn.va.gov/graphics/eeslogo.asp*)

Appendix A: EES Style Guide Layout Templates

The EES Style Guide Layout Templates are available in a separate document.

Appendix B: Example Web Pages based on the EES Style Guide Templates

Example web pages that adhere to the standards and guidelines outlined in this style guide are available in a separate document. These example web pages are provided as visual examples only and should not be interpreted as finished, production-ready web pages.